

is nothing new to Jerry. Whether it was raising his two sons, Glenn and Kevin, with his wife, Barbara, working long hours, or volunteering in the community and the 32nd Ward Regular Democratic Organization, he has given his all every step of the way.

Jerry's family has always been a priority in his life and the love and support they provide is the most important thing to him.

I wish Jerry all the happiness in the future and thank him for his service to the people of Illinois' Fifth Congressional District.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF MERIT STUDENTS

#### HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 2, 2009*

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments of 26 distinguished high school students from Florida's Fifteenth District. I was proud to award the Congressional Medal of Merit to these students during a ceremony at the Brevard County Government Complex on June 1, 2009.

These graduating seniors were nominated by their schools for the Congressional Medal of Merit. To be nominated, each student demonstrated exemplary citizenship and academic excellence throughout their high school careers.

These young men and women have demonstrated an outstanding sense of service to their peers, schools and communities. Honoring their achievements with the Congressional Medal of Merit is a privilege and I congratulate each of them along with their parents, family, teachers and community. Together, this group of students represents the best and brightest America has to offer:

Brevard County: James Brandenburg, Cocoa High School; Lance Freeberg, Viera High School; Charlene Gracia, Florida Air Academy; Michelle Grubka, Melbourne High School; George Holstein III, Community Christian School; Ashley Lipscomb, Rockledge High School; Bryan Maxwell, Holy Trinity Episcopal Academy; Aaron Mayer, Merritt Island High School; Lindsay Miller, Palm Bay High School; Jared Mushell, Eau Gallie High School; Bao-Uyen Nguyen, Edgewood Jr./Sr. High School; Katherine Nickerson, West Shore Jr./Sr. High School; Erica Robes, Merritt Island Christian High School; Trever Steele, Brevard Christian School; Harry Tuazon, Bayside High School; Noel Turner, Satellite High School.

Indian River County: Margaret Cancelosi, Saint Edward's School; Kyrie Carlson, Indian River Charter High School; Tim Martinelli, Sebastian River High School; Sarah Sarnoski, Vero Beach High School.

Osceola County: Jarrett Lane, Osceola High School; Priscila Quito, Gateway High School; Antinia Taylor, New Dimensions High School; Roy Tyson, Harmony High School; Joseph Williams, St. Cloud High School.

Polk County: Nichole Periquito, Ridge Community High School.

#### THE PRESERVATION OF ERDENHEIM FARM

#### HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 2, 2009*

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise to mark a significant victory in my district for open space preservation in Pennsylvania and the United States. Yesterday, an agreement was finalized to permanently protect 426 acres of the 450-acre Erdenheim Farm in Whitmarsh and Springfield Townships.

The conservation of this property will become the centerpiece of 2,000 acres of open space between Fairmount Park in Philadelphia and Fort Washington State Park in Whitmarsh, Pennsylvania. It will also ensure the completion of a regional trail network between Fort Washington Park and the Morris Arboretum that has been envisioned since 1899.

Erdenheim Farm has been working agricultural land since the days of William Penn. It was purchased in 1912 by George D. Widener Jr., son of the streetcar magnate. In 1971, Widener bequeathed the property to his nephew, Fitz Eugene Dixon Jr. Mr. Dixon maintained the property as a working farm raising cattle, sheep, and thoroughbred horses until his death in 2006.

The preservation of Erdenheim Farm is a remarkable example of the excellent work that can be accomplished through public-private partnerships leveraging local and state funds.

There are many organizations that deserve recognition: the descendants of the Dixon Estate for their willingness to work with conservationists to protect the farm; Peter and Bonnie McCausland, for purchasing 259 acres of the estate and placing all but 23 of those acres under conservation easements; the Whitmarsh Foundation led by Hugh Moulton for its efforts to acquire 189 acres using \$26 million in state and local grants, tax revenue, and private donations; the Natural Lands Trust led by Molly Morrison, for its expertise in putting this deal together and enforcing the easements on the land; and state, county, and local officials who also deserve immense credit for their willingness to secure the necessary funding to make this happen.

I ask that the full House of Representatives join me in congratulating everyone that made this historic accomplishment possible. On behalf of the residents of Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties, I acknowledge and appreciate this important work and the opportunity it provides for future generations to enjoy this national treasure.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF RALPH BLANTON

#### HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 2, 2009*

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of firefighter Ralph Blanton of Tempe and to recognize the significant contributions he made to our community.

On May 11, 2009 Ralph passed away of natural causes at the age of 79.

Ralph will be remembered for his active involvement in the development and growth of Tempe's first professional fire department. He gained valuable experience in the 1950s as a volunteer Tempe fireman, long before the formation of a paid fire department. In 1961, he, along with 10 others, established the Tempe Fire Department. Ralph earned the first ever Fireman of the Year award in 1963 for his dedication and work ethic. Finally, after 20 years of service, he was the last member of the original force to retire.

In addition to Ralph's extensive career achievements, he was also known for his role as a mentor. Many young firefighters looked up to him and learned priceless lessons, chief among them to take pride in one's work. Together, he and his wife Shirley helped establish an annual picnic for retired Tempe firefighters, which the union plans to rename the Ralph Blanton Retirees Picnic for Tempe firefighters in his honor.

Madam Speaker, please join me in commemorating the life of Ralph Blanton and remembering the strong and positive impact he left on his community and the many people who knew and loved him.

#### HONORING MARY CRISALLI SANSONE AND ZACHARY SANSONE

#### HON. MICHAEL E. McMAHON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 2, 2009*

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge, congratulate and celebrate the 93rd Birthday of a prominent Brooklyn community activist and civil rights trailblazer, Mary Crisalli Sansone and the 93rd Birthday of her beloved and devoted husband of 60 years, Zachary Sansone.

Since her early days of union organizing with her father, to her involvement with the late Bayard Rustin of the civil rights movement, Mary has fought for social justice and human rights throughout her life.

Mary is the founder of three very influential New York City organizations. Mary organized the first coalition of African Americans, Latinos and Italians in New York City in the 1960s to promote racial harmony, which resulted in the formation of an organization comprised of community leaders known as CURE, Community Understanding for Racial and Ethnic Equality. CURE builds bridges between all racial, ethnic and religious groups to promote tolerance through education and cooperation.

In the 1970s, Mary founded CIAO, the Congress of Italian Americans Organization, which has developed and continues to run many social service programs to help the poor and needy. Mary is and has been a political godmother and angel to those in need.

Mary also is the founder of New Era Democrats (NED), an independent political association. NED is a good government group that promotes and assists government leaders and candidates for elected office who espouse the utmost integrity and independence, regardless of party affiliation.

Zachary Sansone was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in Naples, Italy. After law school, he was inducted into the Italian Army as a First Lieutenant. Zachary served as the Mayor of the town of San Antonio in